

their absurdity, destroy their own validity, and make us, with three hundred tomes of laws, a nation without laws." Is this effusion a recurrence to youthful crudities of ideal politics, or does it hint at the exercise by that upper magistracy of its unchecked powers through a single executive agent like himself? Certain it is, this very concept, though sensibly changed, had a direct influence on the institutions of the empire.

In the absence of sufficient evidence as to the facts, there is but one complex theory which explains subsequent occurrences. The Egyptian expedition, as its commander publicly said in leaving Toulon, was the right wing of the Army of England; at the same time it was consonant with the ancient French policy, and appealed to the romantic, Oriental side of Bonaparte's own temperament; finally, as a practical measure it gave him a chance to await with distinction the outcome of affairs in Paris, whether it should be, as he said to Bourrienne, "for a few months or for six years." At the same time it was an anchor to windward. In consequence of the Bernadotte incident, the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Rastadt had refused even the entire left bank of the Rhine to France, and European sentiment was apparently consolidating for another coalition. "I go to the Orient," Napoleon said to Joseph, "with every means to guarantee success. If France needs me; if the number of those who think like Talleyrand, Sieyds, and Roederer increases; if war breaks out, and is unlucky for France, then I shall return, more certain of public opinion than now. If, on the other hand, the Republic is successful in war; if a political general like me appears and centers the hopes of the people in himself, good; then still in the Orient I shall perhaps, do greater service to the world than he."

Everything indicates that in the months immediately